

7 Attica Prisoners Are Accused in Latest Indictments

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Special to The New York Times

WARSAQ, N. Y., Dec. 19—

Six more men who were inmates of Attica prison during the 1971 uprising there were taken to court here today, accused of crimes including kidnapping a guard, slashing the throat of a hostage and assaulting a hostage who later died as a result of state troopers' gunfire during the crushing of the rebellion.

As the criminal charges in the special Attica inquiry continued to unfold, defense lawyers charged that the state had "threatened, coerced and bought off" Attica inmates with parole time and promises of immunity from prosecution in order to get them to testify against fellow prisoners.

The charge, made by Barbara Handschu of the Attica Defense Committee, was rejected without comment by the office of Deputy Attorney General Robert Fischer, the special prosecutor who was named to investigate the uprising, which led to the death of 32 inmates and 11 prison employees.

Last week Mr. Fischer obtained 37 sealed indictments from a special Wyoming County grand jury.

Grand Jury Meets

The grand jury, now in its 13th month, met again today with no word given on possible additional indictments. There have been rumors that some Attica guards have been indicted, but there has been no official confirmation.

The men charged today brought to 18 the number of current and former convicts accused thus far.

Those accused today obtained adjournments until next month in order to hire a lawyer. Most of them indicated

they had been in prison and had no way of learning of the charges until today.

Wilbur Johnson was accused of assaulting Harrison Whalen, a guard taken hostage during the revolt, which began Sept. 9, 1971. Mr. Whalen was later found to have died as a result of gunshot wounds suffered in the armed assault by state police that ended the insurrection five days later.

Another Kidnapping

Johnson also was accused with three other one-time Attica inmates, Otis McGaughy, Ronald Coyne and Herbert (Scott X) Dean, of having kidnapped a guard, Franklin Kline, and held him hostage.

This was the second day of opening indictments here at the county seat, 15 miles from the Attica State Correctional Facility. Prisoners arrived stony-faced in chains after early morning trips in vans and sheriffs' cars that moved cautiously through the snow-packed roads of this frigid Genesee Valley community.

Again, young demonstrators from the Prisoners Solidarity Committee marched outside the courthouse, a handsome building in a rural setting that faces the town's Civil War Memorial, which is draped with Christmas boughs.

No heavy police guard was in evidence, and few townsfolk have appeared at the courthouse, although telephone operators occasionally listen to on newsmen's calls.

In court, Daniel Pochoda, an Attica defense attorney from the New York City Legal Aid Society, questioned the need for sealed indictments and the slow pace of the arraignments, which are expected to take a week. Prosecutors in the past have been able to gather more than 100 suspects in one day

when they chose to, the critics have asserted.

While Assistant Attorney General Gerald Ryan is handling the technical aspects of the arraignment, he is receiving directions from Mr. Fischer's office each day on which indictments will be opened.

Members of the Attica Defense Committee complain that such secrecy is unnecessary since most of the suspects already are in prison. They contend that the pace of the arraignment is being dictated by political considerations, emphasizing that Mr. Fischer is an appointee of Governor Rockefeller, who came under heavy criticism for his handling of the uprising and police assault.

But Mr. Ryan says there are numerous technical problems such as transporting inmates from various state prisons and arresting those who have been paroled.

Some inmates appeared comforted by the 50 supporters in the courtroom — college-age youths—who stood at respectful attention and offered up-raised fists in salute.

This was the second straight day of indictments for Otis McGaughy, who complained to

State Supreme Court Justice Carman Ball that there was no need for the suspense and trouble of separate proceedings.

"When's this going to stop?" he asked. "Will I be back tomorrow?"

The judge responded: "You might well be."

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